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OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

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**Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation improves in some areas
but has not implemented several critical recommendations**

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has made progress in implementing past audit recommendations, but long-standing issues like juvenile ward confinement still plague the department, Inspector General Matthew L. Cate reported today. "The Division of Juvenile Justice addressed most recommendations on mental health and counseling services," Cate said. "But the department failed to make much progress in several key areas, including the ability to provide restricted program wards with basic services and at least three hours outside their locked rooms every day."

The 240-page accountability audit evaluates the department's efforts to address unresolved recommendations the Office of the Inspector General identified in 15 audits issued between 2000 and 2005. Overall, the 15 audits included 349 original recommendations, but the current audit focused on the 182 recommendations that the Division of Juvenile Justice and the Board of Parole Hearings had not implemented as of 2005. The Inspector General's 2007 follow-up audit reveals that the department only partially implemented or did not implement 38 percent of these remaining recommendations. The Inspector General noted that the department had ample time to implement recommendations from past audits—in some cases up to seven years.

The Division of Juvenile Justice has shown the most overall improvement, fully or substantially implementing 83 percent of the 330 original recommendations directed to the

division. In the latest review, the division had fully or substantially implemented 67 percent of the recommendations that remained unimplemented as of 2005. The division also made significant progress responding to counseling and mental health program recommendations; 82 percent of counseling services recommendations and 77 percent of mental health program recommendations were fully or substantially implemented. However, the Division of Juvenile Justice continues to have difficulty implementing recommendations related to restricted programs, facility security, education services, and medical care.

“While the Division of Juvenile Justice made good progress in most areas, I remain concerned with the department’s failure to ensure that restricted program wards get adequate time out of their rooms,” Cate said. “The facilities often cannot document that the wards have had the required three hours outside their rooms. In the case of the Heman G. Stark Youth Correctional Facility, none of the restricted program wards examined received the mandated three hours outside their rooms. This isolation may worsen existing mental health problems and increase suicide risk.”

Another unsolved issue is the department’s inadequate response to past recommendations when compared to the responses of individual institutions. In the Inspector General’s 2006 accountability audit of the department’s adult operations and adult programs, the review found that the department was much less responsive to recommendations than staff and management at individual institutions. Similarly, this year’s review found the department to be less effective than individual juvenile facilities in implementing the Inspector General’s recommendations.

The Board of Parole Hearings did not fare as well in the Inspector General’s review. Although the board has several projects underway and reports that the projects are close to completion, overall it has implemented only 11 percent of the 19 original recommendations directed to the board. This year’s review found that the board adequately responded to 7 percent of recommendations from five previous audits that remained unimplemented since 2005. For example, the board continues to conduct unnecessary placement hearings, and it has made little progress in implementing procedures to govern foreign language interpreter services. This potential waste of state funds continues despite the department having ample time to take action on these recommendations.

This year’s accountability audit also revealed another concern—the number of instances the department overstated the extent of its implementation of prior recommendations. The Inspector General found that the department overstated the extent of its implementation for 28 percent of recommendations. Moreover, the Inspector General determined that 11 percent of these responses were substantially overstated. This means the department

reported full implementation of recommendations when it had only partially implemented or not implemented the recommendations. The department's overstatement of its actions indicates that either it did not fully understand the intent of the Office of the Inspector General's original recommendation, or the department was not fully aware of the extent of the actions it had taken in response to the recommendations.

The full text of the Office of the Inspector General's accountability audit covering the Division of Juvenile Justice and the Board of Parole Hearings may be viewed and downloaded from the Office of the Inspector General's Web site at <http://www.oig.ca.gov/>.

The Office of the Inspector General is an independent state agency responsible for oversight of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The office carries out its mission by conducting audits, special reviews, and investigations of the department to uncover criminal conduct, administrative wrongdoing, poor management practices, waste, fraud, and other abuses by staff, supervisors, and management. The Office of the Inspector General conducted this accountability audit under the authority provided in California Penal Code section 6126.

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